

## 8 STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN HIRING A PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT (PCA)

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- Step 1      **TASKS:** Identify the kind of support/assistance that you need from the PCA. Describe how much time it takes to do each task. Ask for input from your family and others who support/assist you.
- Step 2      **PAYMENT:** Determine how you will pay the PCA. If another party is paying, be sure to know the policies and guidelines. If you are paying, determine how much you will pay.
- Step 3      **JOB DESCRIPTION:** Write a description of what you expect the PCA to do. Be specific when you describe the tasks. Develop a sample daily schedule that lists what the tasks are and when they will be done and why.
- QUALIFICATIONS:** Make a list of what kinds of training and work experience that you expect the PCA to have. This may include special training/certification such as First Aid, CPR, etc. keeping in mind that the more qualified a PCA is, the more the services will cost. Sometimes training a PCA yourself to do things the way you want them done is more satisfactory than retraining a PCA with experience.
- Step 4      **FINDING A PCA:** You may decide to consult your local Center for Independent Living or use an employment agency or another source to help you find a PCA. If you decide to place an ad in a local paper, newsletter, or on a bulletin board, list the minimum qualifications that you expect the PCA to have. You may also want the applicant to tell you what kind of transportation he/she has. Provide a phone number or post office address for responses. (For safety, don't include your home address.)
- Step 5      **INTERVIEW:** Prepare a list of questions before the interview. Tell him/her specifically the assistance/supports that you expect. Show him/her the sample daily schedule. You must be comfortable with the PCA, because some of the tasks may be very personal. Mention these tasks in the interview. (If safety is a concern, you might consider holding interviews at some place other than your home. If you do the interview by yourself, have someone nearby, such as a family member or friend.)

Before the interview, ask the applicant for the following information:

- Legal name, address, phone number
- Social security number, drivers license number
- Date they can begin working for you
- Previous work experience, including name, address,  
and phone number of employers
- Education and training
- Disclosure of previous felony convictions
- Names and phone numbers of references

(There is some information that you should not request. It is information that could be used by a potential employer to discriminate: age, date of birth, marital status, race, sex/gender. Because a PCA is usually a part-time job, find out how far the candidates live from you—it may not be worth a long trip for a part-time job.)

**Step 6**      **TRAINING:** After you have hired a PCA, it is important that you train him/her. Clearly tell him/her what you expect. Let the PCA know if there is personal information that is confidential. Be assertive in communicating your needs, feelings, and decisions.

**Step 7**      **AS AN EMPLOYER:** Show the PCA mutual respect. You and the PCA have the right to different feelings, opinions, or points of view. If there is a problem, handle it promptly and in a professional manner. Clearly identify the problem and tell the PCA what you expect to happen. Then thank the PCA for listening. The PCA should leave the meeting knowing exactly what you expect.

Give the PCA feedback. If the PCA has improved, tell him/her. If you have made a reasonable request and clearly communicated it to the PCA and the problem continues, you may need to let him/her go.

**Step 8**      **BACKUP SUPPORT:** Maintain a backup support in case the PCA suddenly quits or it becomes necessary to fire him/her.

If you are the parent of a young person, let your adolescent or young adult take the lead in developing the job description and interviewing the PCA. While you can help to evaluate the choices, the decision should be up to him/her. This is an important step in developing self-advocacy, self-determination, and other skills for successfully employing a PCA.



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